

# EXTEND CRITICAL “KEEP KIDS FED ACT” FUNDS!

SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS FACE FISCAL CRISIS

*Under the bipartisan [Keep Kids Fed Act](#), Congress raised the SY2022-23 federal school meal reimbursement rates by 40 cents per lunch and 15 cents per breakfast. These additional funds, which expired on June 30, were a lifeline for schools struggling with persistently high food, supply and labor costs. Congress must extend the temporary reimbursement increase for SY2023-24 to ensure schools can maintain high-quality meals for students and prevent meal program losses from cutting into limited education funds.*

“At the end of the day, districts have to pass a balanced budget. Without the additional reimbursement, districts must cover the cost of the school meal programs by making cuts elsewhere. That means schools across the country will have to reduce or eliminate certain educational services; opt for cheaper products for meals, like canned fruit instead of fresh; lay off staff; or increase the cost of paid meals, further burdening families that are already struggling. By ending the temporary increase in reimbursements now, Congress is forcing superintendents to make decisions and spending cuts that are not in the best interest of our students. I strongly urge Congress to extend the temporary reimbursement increase for SY2023-24 and continue providing the critical funds necessary to feed all students and help them reach their full potential.”

**Gladys I. Cruz, Ph.D.,  
District Superintendent of  
Questar III BOCES and  
President of AASA, The  
School Superintendents  
Association**



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“These critical funds have expired as school meal programs face a breaking point due to historically high costs, rising unpaid meal debt and increased staffing and equipment needs to meet impending nutrition standards. Without higher reimbursement rates, schools will be forced to cut staff, reduce scratch cooking and limit the variety of healthy menu options for students, including fresh produce.”

**Chris Derico, SNS, Child Nutrition  
Director for Barbour County  
Schools, WV, and School  
Nutrition Association President**



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“As a country, we disagree on many aspects of public policy -- but we should be able to agree that every child deserves food security. Inflation and increased needs are making it harder and harder for us to guarantee this, and without the critical funding from the Keep Kids Fed Act, we're looking at a nearly \$1.5 million shortfall. This should be an easy, bipartisan win: feeding children in need.”

**Guadalupe Guerrero, Chair of  
the Council of the Great City  
Schools**



“School district leaders across the nation are greatly concerned about the expiration of the Keep Kids Fed Act. The KKFA provided critical funding for schools to sustainably feed students breakfast and lunch. Any decrease in meal reimbursement rates will have a direct impact on the students we serve, especially during an inflationary period with record-high food costs. As families struggle to make ends meet, they turn to their schools for help in providing their children with nutritious meals. Reducing federal funding will force districts to make the difficult choice between increasing menu prices, which means some families will not be able to afford meals for their children, or pulling funds from other sources to ensure affordable meals, thus reducing resources available to support instruction and learning.”

**John Hutchison, CPA, MBA,  
SFO, Chief Financial Officer of  
Olathe Unified School District  
233, Olathe, KS, and President  
of ASBO International**



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**ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS  
INTERNATIONAL**

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“Students cannot learn without adequate nutrition and for far too many children, school meals are a necessity. And these school meals are often the most nutritious ones they receive. Through the Keep Kids Fed Act, critical funding has been provided to schools to help feed students breakfast and lunch, including providing them with healthier options. National PTA urges Congress to continue this vital funding to help ensure students have access to healthy school meal programs, which is critical to their success both in and out of the classroom.”

**Yvonne Johnson,  
President, National PTA**



“From the perspective of the directors operating school meal programs across the country, the end of USDA’s special meal reimbursement rate on June 30, 2023, will have a crushing effect on program finances. School nutrition programs are still working at coming out of the impact of the pandemic, with hourly wages recently increased as high as \$25 per hour, food cost (as a percentage of income) has seen increases as high as 50% this year, the highest increases seen in more than 30 years, and some of the delivery costs have risen over 300%. With continued supply chain challenges, lack of availability of certain foods and supplies, and fewer participating companies and processors (whether via consolidation or exiting the K-12 industry) in the school food environment, we have been pushed beyond what we can accommodate within the federal reimbursement rate for a free school meal. An extension of the special meal reimbursement for the upcoming 2023-24 school year, as an investment in America’s children and communities, will ensure that school meal programs, an essential source of food and nutrition security for all children, will help us weather this storm.”

**Dr. Katie Wilson,  
Executive Director,  
Urban School Food  
Alliance**

